

## CLAIM STATUS:

Claim 1 (Cancelled).

2. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 4 ,wherein:  
the software module is provided to meet [[meets]] the FDT/DTM standard.

3. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 4 , further  
comprising the step of:

providing an FDT frame application which runs in the control unit which  
serves as runtime environment for the software module.

4. (Previously presented) A method for exchanging data between an  
operating tool or a control unit and a plurality of field devices via a communication  
network, comprising the steps of:

storing corresponding device drivers for the field devices, whereby a device  
driver encapsulates all data and functions of the corresponding field device and  
whereby the device driver provides a graphical user interface;

providing an encryption driver which is embodied as an independent and  
separately exchangeable software module stored In the operating tool or the  
control unit;

encrypting the data in the encryption driver via a corresponding algorithm;

exchanging the encrypted data between the operating program stored in  
the operating tool or the control unit and the field device with the aid of a  
communication driver; and

unencrypting the exchanged data in the field device and executing the  
corresponding commands.